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What Americans think about Trump's military intervention abroad, according to a new AP-NORC poll

By LINLEY SANDERS
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — More than half of U.S. adults believe President Donald Trump has "gone too far" in using the U.S. military to intervene in other countries, according to a new AP-NORC poll.

The poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research was conducted Jan. 8-11, after Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro's capture. It found that 56% of U.S. adults think Trump has overstepped on military interventions abroad, while majorities disapprove of how the Republican president is handling foreign policy in general and Venezuela in particular.

The findings largely cut against Trump's aggressive foreign policy stance, which has recently included efforts to exert control over Venezuelan oil, calls for the U.S. to take over Greenland and warnings that the U.S. would provide aid to people protesting



President Donald Trump speaks during a meeting with oil executives in the East Room of the White House, Jan. 9, 2026, in Washington, as Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio listen.

in Iran. Many did see the Trump administration's recent intervention in Venezuela as a "good thing" for stopping the flow of illegal drugs into the U.S. and a benefit for the Venezuelan people, but fewer say it's a positive for U.S. national security or the U.S. economy. Republicans are mostly fol-

lowing Trump's lead, despite the sharp contrast with the "America First" platform he ran on. But few Republicans want Trump to go further, underscoring the risks of a continued focus abroad.

Most Republicans say Trump's actions have been 'about right'

Associated Press

While the U.S. used its military power in Venezuela to capture Maduro, Trump has also made recent comments about seizing Greenland "the hard way" if Denmark's leaders do not agree to a deal for the U.S. to take it over, and he has warned Iran that the U.S. will come to the "rescue" of peaceful protesters.

Democrats and independents are driving the belief that Trump has overstepped. About 9 in 10 Democrats and roughly 6 in 10 independents say Trump has "gone too far" on military intervention, compared with about 2 in 10 Republicans.

The vast majority of Republicans, 71%, say Trump's actions have been "about right," and only about 1 in 10 want to see him go further.

About 6 in 10 Americans, 57%, disapprove of how Trump is handling the situation in Venezuela, which is slightly lower than the 61% who disapprove of his approach to foreign policy. Both measures are in line with his overall job approval, which has largely remained steady throughout his second term.

Many say the US action in Venezuela will be good for halting drug trafficking

Many Americans see some benefits from U.S. intervention in Venezuela.

About half of Americans believe the U.S. intervening in Venezuela will be "mostly a good thing" for halting the flow of illegal drugs into the country. Close to 4 in 10, 44%, believe the U.S. actions will do more to benefit than harm the Venezuelan people, who lived under Maduro's dictatorship for more than a decade. But U.S. adults are divided on whether intervention will be good or bad for U.S. economic and national security interests or if it simply won't have an impact.

Republicans are more likely than Democrats and independents to see benefits to the U.S. action, particularly its effects on drug trafficking. About 8 in 10 Republicans say America's intervention will be "mostly a good thing" for stopping the flow of illegal drugs into the country, but fewer Republicans, about 6 in 10, believe it will benefit the U.S. economy.

Democrats and independents drive desire for U.S. to take a 'less active' role

Most Americans don't want greater U.S. involvement in world affairs, the poll found. Nearly half of Americans want the U.S. to take a "less active" role, and about one-third say its current role is "about right."

Only about 2 in 10 U.S. adults say they want the country to be more involved globally, including about 1 in 10 Republicans. At least half of Democrats and independents now want the U.S. to do less, a sharp shift from a few months ago.

Republicans, meanwhile, have grown more likely to indicate that Trump's level of involvement is right. About 6 in 10 Republicans, 64%, say the country's current role in world affairs is "about right," which is up slightly from 55% in September. About one-quarter of Republicans say the U.S. needs to take a "less active role" in solving problems around the globe, down slightly from 34% a few months ago. □

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Trump's freeze of an offshore wind project faces scrutiny from a judge he appointed

By **MICHAEL PHILLIS** and **JENNIFER McDERMOTT**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal judge is considering whether to set aside a Trump administration order pausing construction on a major offshore wind farm for New York, which the developer says could mean the death of a project that's 60% complete.

The Empire Wind project is designed to power more than 500,000 homes. Norwegian company Equinor said the project was in jeopardy due to the limited availability of specialized vessels, as well as heavy financial losses. It's one of five big offshore wind projects on the East Coast that the administration froze days before Christmas, citing national security concerns. Developers and states have sued seeking to block the order. The case was heard Wednesday by District Judge Carl J. Nichols, an appointee of President Donald Trump. Nichols ended the hearing without ruling, saying he needed to think about it but would decide very quickly. The government filed their national security reasoning in secret for Nichols to review. The administration hasn't publicly revealed specifics about the nation-



Wind turbine bases, generators and blades sit at The Portsmouth Marine terminal that is the staging area for Dominion Energy Virginia, which is developing Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind, Dec. 22, 2025, in Portsmouth, Va.

al security concerns, and at least one expert says the offshore projects were permitted following years of careful review that included the Department of Defense. During the hearing, Nichols said the government's main security concern seemed to be over operation of the wind turbines, not construction a contention the government would later disagree with. He also sharply questioned the government for not responding to key points in Empire Wind's court filings, like the accusation the

Trump administration didn't follow the right procedures and acted arbitrarily. "Your brief doesn't even include the word arbitrary," the judge said. When the government said they were still contesting Empire Wind's arguments on these points, Nichols responded, "This is not the way we do things." Equinor's hearing is the second of three for these legal challenges this week; on Monday, a judge ruled that a project serving Rhode Island and Connecticut could resume. Trump has targeted offshore

wind from his first days back in the White House, most recently calling wind farms "losers" that lose money, destroy the landscape and kill birds. The administration's stance against offshore wind and renewable energy more broadly runs counter to dozens of other countries, and experts say the world needs a major buildout of renewable electricity to address climate change. The global offshore wind market is growing, with China leading the world in new installations. Nearly all of the

new electricity added to the grid in 2024 was renewable. The British government said Wednesday that it secured a record 8.4 gigawatts of offshore wind in Europe's largest offshore wind auction to date, enough clean electricity to power more than 12 million homes. It said that as Britain races to cut bills and meet growing energy demand, the price for offshore wind agreed to in the auction is 40% cheaper than the cost of building and operating a new gas power plant.

Molly Morris, Equinor's senior vice president overseeing Empire Wind, said federal officials have not given them any explanation of the national security concerns or how to mitigate them.

A specialized heavy lift vessel, Heerema's Sleipnir, must begin lifting the topside to the project's offshore substation off the transport ship and onto its foundation because the Sleipnir is scheduled to depart by Feb. 1 for other commitments, Morris said.

The topside weighs more than 3,000 tons and there are few specialized offshore wind installation ships in the world. Equinor's limited liability company has spent about \$4 billion to develop and construct the project. □

Associated Press

Hundreds of laid-off researchers at U.S. workplace safety center are being reinstated

By **MIKE STOBBE**
AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Federal officials are reinstating hundreds of U.S. health workers who were laid off last year from a small health agency that aims to protect workers.

In April, President Donald Trump's administration gutted the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, where scientists, engineers and others conduct research and recommend ways to prevent work-related injury, illness, disability and death.

Government officials laid off close to 900 of NIOSH's 1,000 employees. The layoffs were part of the Republican president's remaking of the federal workforce led by then-adviser Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency, but they drew harsh rebukes from firefighters, coal

miners, medical equipment manufacturers and a range of others.

Some employees were brought back last year amid legal challenges and political pressure, including those who staffed a health monitoring program for miners in West Virginia. But now all the terminations have been rescinded, according to the American Federation of Government Employees, which represents workers at NIOSH and parts of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"The administration's attempt to lay off nearly every NIOSH worker was shameful and illegal, considering that much of NIOSH's work is required by law," AFGE national president Everett Kelley said in a statement. A U.S. Department of Health and Human Services spokesman on Wednesday confirmed that laid-off NIOSH employees were being reinstated. □



People rally on Wednesday, April 23, 2025, in support of some 185 researchers and other employees of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) in Morgantown, W.Va., who received reduction-in-force notices as part of a larger push by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to dismiss 10,000 federal employees.

Associated Press

The FBI searches a Washington Post reporter's home as part of a classified documents investigation

By **ALANNA DURKIN RICHER**
and **ERIC TUCKER**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — FBI agents searched a Washington Post reporter's home on Wednesday as part of a leak investigation involving a Pentagon contractor accused of sharing classified information, the Justice Department said.

Hannah Natanson, who has been covering President Donald Trump's transformation of the federal government, had a phone, two laptops and a Garmin watch seized in the search of her Virginia home, the Post reported. Natanson has reported extensively on the federal workforce and recently published a piece describing how she gained hundreds of new sources leading one colleague to call her "the federal government whisperer."

While classified documents investigations aren't unusual, the search of a reporter's home marks an escalation in the government's efforts to crack down on leaks.

First Amendment groups



A person walks into the One Franklin Square Building, home of The Washington Post newspaper, June 21, 2024, in Washington.

Associated Press

expressed alarm at the search, saying it could chill investigative journalism that holds government officials to account.

"Physical searches of reporters' devices, homes, and belongings are some of the most invasive investigative steps law enforcement can take," Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press President Bruce

Brown said. "While we won't know the government's arguments about overcoming these very steep hurdles until the affidavit is made public, this is a tremendous escalation in the administration's intrusions into the independence of the press."

Attorney General Pam Bondi said that the search was done at the request of the

Defense Department and that the journalist was "obtaining and reporting classified and illegally leaked information from a Pentagon contractor."

"Leaking classified information puts America's national security and the safety of our military heroes in serious jeopardy," White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said in a post

on X. "President Trump has zero tolerance for it and will continue to aggressively crack down on these illegal acts moving forward."

The warrant says the search was related to an investigation into a system engineer and information technology specialist for a government contractor in Maryland who authorities allege took home classified reports, the Post reported. The worker, Aurelio Perez-Lugones, was charged earlier this month with unlawful retention of national defense information, according to court papers. He has not been charged with sharing classified information, and he has not been accused in court papers with leaking.

Perez-Lugones, who held a top secret security clearance, is accused of printing classified and sensitive reports at work.

In a search of his Maryland home and car this month, authorities found documents marked "SECRET," including one in a lunchbox, according to court papers. □

Renee Good's family hires George Floyd law firm to investigate Minneapolis ICE shooting

By **HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH**
Associated Press

Renee Good's family is accusing federal immigration officers of killing the Minneapolis mother as she attempted to follow agents' instructions, and said Wednesday they have hired the same law firm that represented George Floyd's family to press for answers and accountability.

Her loved ones said in a statement they want Good, 37, remembered as "an agent of peace" and urged the public not to use her death as a political flashpoint, according to the Chicago-based firm Romanucci & Blandin. The firm said it will release information from its investigation in the coming weeks.

The family's decision to hire

the law firm came the same week the Justice Department said it sees no basis to open a federal civil rights investigation into the shooting. An FBI probe of Renee Good's death is ongoing. The Trump administration

has defended the ICE officer's actions, saying he fired in self-defense while standing in front of Good's vehicle as it began to move forward. But that explanation has been widely panned by Minneapolis

Mayor Jacob Frey, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz and others based on videos of the confrontation.

Roughly half a dozen federal prosecutors in Minnesota resigned this week and several supervisors in the criminal section of the Civil Rights Division in Washington gave notice of their departures, according to people familiar with the matter.

Romanucci & Blandin said the family wants answers about the federal operation taking place on Jan. 7 in the neighborhood where Good was killed, as well as officers' actions during the encounter and delays in medical aid after the shooting. The ICE agent who fired has not been publicly identified.

Good's partner, Becca Good, and other relatives

say the couple had just dropped off their 6-year-old child at school and stopped to observe the law enforcement activity when officers approached them, according to the law firm. The attorneys said Good appeared to reverse and turn her vehicle away from an agent before the shooting, although investigators have not released an official account.

"What happened to Renee is wrong," the firm said, adding that they intend to share findings "on a rolling basis" because they believe the community is not receiving adequate information elsewhere. The firm, which helped secure a \$27 million settlement for Floyd's family, is now representing Becca Good as well as Renee Good's parents and siblings. □



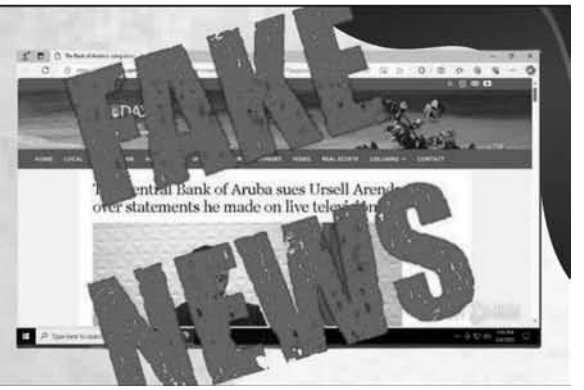
A person walks past signage for Renee Good, who was fatally shot by an ICE officer earlier in the week, in Minneapolis, Minn., Sunday, Jan. 11, 2026.

Associated Press

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Sudanese army soldiers parade in the streets of Omdurman, a district of Khartoum, Sudan, Wednesday, Dec. 31, 2025, to mark the 70th anniversary of the Sudan Independence.

Associated Press

Discussions to end Sudan war resume in Cairo as it nears the 3-year mark

By **FATMA KHALED**
Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Sudan peace efforts resumed in Cairo on Wednesday with Egypt and the United Nations calling on warring parties to agree to a nationwide humanitarian truce, as the war between the army and its rival paramilitary nears the three-year mark. Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty told reporters that Egypt wouldn't accept the collapse of Sudan or its institutions, or any attempt to undermine its unity or divide its territory, describing such scenarios as "red lines."

Abdelatty said during a joint news conference with Ramtane Lamamra, the U.N. secretary-general's personal envoy for Sudan, that Egypt won't stand idly and won't hesitate to take the necessary measures to help preserve Sudan's unity.

"There is absolutely no room for recognizing parallel entities or any militias.

Under no circumstances can we equate Sudanese state institutions, including the Sudanese army, with any other militias," he said on the sidelines of the fifth meeting of the Consultative Mechanism to Enhance and Coordinate Peace Efforts. Lamamra said the meeting demonstrated that diplomacy remains a viable path toward peace.

The paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, or RSF, and the military have been at war since April 2023. The conflict that has seen multiple atrocities and pushed Sudan into one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. Although repeated attempts at peace talks have failed to end the war, Abdelatty said that there's a regional agreement to secure an immediate humanitarian truce, including certain withdrawals and the establishment of safe humanitarian corridors.

Humanitarian aid Massad Boulos, the senior

U.S. adviser for Arab and African Affairs, also took part in the meeting. He said that more than 1.3 metric tons of humanitarian supplies entered el-Fasher, the capital of North Darfur, on Wednesday, with the help of American-led negotiations, marking the first such delivery since the city was besieged by the RSF 18 months ago, and fell to the paramilitary group in October. "As we press the warring parties for a nationwide humanitarian truce, we will continue to support mechanisms to facilitate the unhindered delivery of assistance to areas suffering from famine, malnutrition, and conflict-driven displacement," Boulos posted on X. Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi discussed with Boulos the need to increase coordination between both countries to achieve stability in Sudan, with el-Sissi expressing appreciation to U.S. President Donald Trump's efforts to end the war. □

France bans British anti-migration activists targeting migrant boats



Town employees walk next to an inflatable boat punctured by French police and used by migrants to cross the Channel, Monday, Dec. 22, 2025 on the beach of Gravelines, northern France.

Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — France said Wednesday that it has banned 10 members of a British group who attempted to stop migrants leaving French beaches on small boats bound for the U.K.

The ban on the members of the "Raise the Colours" group prevents them from entering or staying in France, the Interior Ministry said.

A ministry statement characterized the group's militants as "extreme right" and described their activities in France as a potential threat to public order. It said the activists made trips to France to hunt for and destroy small boats used on the migration route across the English Channel.

The group's activists have also carried out "propaganda activities" along the northern French coastline "aimed at the British public, which was called upon to strengthen the movement's ranks in order to put an end to the migration phenomenon," the statement added.

The ministry did not name the 10 British nationals but said they had been "identified as militants within the movement who carried out actions on French territory."

Cross-Channel migration has become a thorn in relations between Britain and France in recent years and is a particularly divisive political issue in the U.K.

More than 41,000 people crossed the Channel to the U.K. in small boats last year, an increase on 2024 but fewer than the 2022 record, when more than 45,000 people made the crossing, according to the Home Office. □

Venezuela's acting president vows to continue releasing prisoners detained under Maduro

By REGINA GARCIA CANO
Associated Press
CARACAS, Venezuela

(AP) — Venezuela's acting President Delcy Rodríguez on Wednesday vowed to continue releasing prisoners detained under former President Nicolás Maduro during her first press briefing since Maduro was ousted by the United States earlier this month.

Addressing journalists from a red carpet at the presidential palace, Rodríguez struck a conciliatory tone and said the Venezuelan government was entering a "new political moment." She offered assurances that the process of releasing hundreds of detainees a move reportedly made at the behest of the Trump administration "has not yet concluded." The releases have drawn criticism for being too slow and secretive.

"This opportunity is for Venezuela and for the people of Venezuela to be able to see reflected a new moment where coexistence, where living together, where recognition of the other allows building and erecting a new spirituality,"



Venezuela's acting President Delcy Rodríguez, center, smiles flanked by Interior Minister Diosdado Cabello, right, and National Assembly President, her brother, Jorge Rodríguez, as they prepare to make a statement at Miraflores presidential palace in Caracas, Venezuela, Wednesday, Jan. 14, 2026.

Rodríguez said in the address, which lasted just over five minutes. She took no questions.

Flanked by her brother and National Assembly President Jorge Rodríguez, and Interior Minister Diosdado Cabello, she also criticized organizations that advocate on behalf of prisoners' rights. She pledged "strict"

enforcement of the law and credited Maduro with starting the prisoner releases as a signal that her government meant no wholesale break from the past.

"Crimes related to the constitutional order are being evaluated," she said, in apparent reference to detainees held on what human rights groups say are po-

litically motivated charges. "Messages of hatred, intolerance, acts of violence will not be permitted."

Despite sanctioning her for human rights violations during his first term, President Donald Trump enlisted Rodríguez to help secure U.S. control over Venezuela's oil sales. To ensure the former Maduro loyalist does

this bidding, he threatened Rodríguez with a "situation probably worse than Maduro," who faces federal charges of drug-trafficking from a Brooklyn jail.

In endorsing Rodríguez, Trump sidelined María Corina Machado, the leader of Venezuela's opposition who won a Nobel Peace Prize last year for her campaign to restore the nation's democracy.

After dismissing her as lacking the sufficient support and respect to govern, Trump said he'll meet Machado in the Oval Office on Thursday for the first time since Maduro's capture. The meeting is seen as a key opportunity for Machado to press Trump on her hopes for a democratic transition in Venezuela.

After a lengthy career serving as Maduro's close confidant and representing the revolution started by the late Hugo Chávez on the world stage, Rodríguez now walks a tightrope, navigating pressures from both Washington and her hard-line colleagues who hold direct sway over the security forces. □

Associated Press

Ukraine's new defense minister reveals scale of desertions as millions avoid the draft

By ILLIA NOVIKOV
Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Wide-scale desertions and 2 million draft-dodgers are among a raft of challenges facing Ukraine's military as Russia presses on with its invasion of its neighbor after almost four years of fighting, the new defense minister said Wednesday. Mykhailo Fedorov told Ukraine's parliament that other problems facing Ukraine's armed forces include excessive bureaucracy, a Soviet-style approach to management, and disruptions in the supply of equipment to troops along the about 1,000-kilometer (600-mile) front line. "We cannot fight a war with new technologies

but an old organizational structure," Fedorov said. He said the military had faced some 200,000 troop desertions and draft-dodging by around 2 million

people. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy appointed 34-year-old Fedorov at the start of the year. The former head of Ukraine's digital transfor-



Mykhailo Fedorov, Ukraine's Minister of Digital Transformation speaks during an interview with The Associated Press in Kyiv, Ukraine, Friday, April 21, 2023.

Associated Press

mation policies is credited with spearheading the the army's drone technology and introducing several successful e-government platforms.

His appointment was part of a broad government reshuffle that the Ukrainian leader said aimed to sharpen the focus on security, defense development and diplomacy amid a new U.S.-led push to find a peace settlement.

Fedorov said the defense ministry is facing a shortfall of 300 billion hryvnia (\$6.9 billion) in funding needs.

The European Union will dedicate most of a massive new loan program to help fund Ukraine's military and economy over the next two years, European

Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said Wednesday.

Fedorov said Ukraine's defense sector has expanded significantly since Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022. At the start of the war, he said, the country had seven private drone companies and two firms developing electronic warfare systems. Today, he said, there are nearly 500 drone manufacturers and about 200 electronic warfare companies in Ukraine. He added that some sectors have emerged from scratch, including private missile producers, which now number about 20, and more than 100 companies manufacturing ground-based robotic systems. □

The legend of the Kibrahacha tree



ORANJESTAD—The Kibrahacha is a famous tree known locally for its bright, yellow flowers that blooms for just three days. Scientifically known as *Tabebuia billbergii*, and in English as the Yellow Poui, this tree is native to the Caribbean islands of Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao, and is considered among locals as one of the most spectacular trees on the island. But did you also know that the beautiful yellow flowers have a story behind them?

The Kibrahacha is said to have extremely hard wood—so hard that it can break an axe. In fact, that's what its name means in Papiamentu: "kibra" (break) "hacha" (axe). The flowers bloom around April and May, but this only last for about three days, as the flowers start to fall off and

the tree starts growing its green leaves. The Kibrahacha is especially particular, as it's the only one among its neighboring trees to starts blooming first.

The legend of the Kibrahacha

Written by Hubert (Lio Booi)

One day Aterima, who lived west of the hill Sero Warawara, woke up one day to find her father sleeping in his hammock, suffering a bout of terrible fever. Her mother was very worried, and as was the custom in the olden days, asked Aterima to go fetch Kudawecha, who was a epistemophile, to come see his father.

Aterima wasted to time and went to go fetch Kudawecha. Upon telling Kudawecha that her father was sick, he immediately accompanied Aterima back to her hut, where he encountered her father in a bad state. Not willing to waste any time, he told Aterima that the only thing that can cure her father is a home-made potion made out of the Kibrahacha flower. At the time the Kibrahacha was not yet in her blooming season, but the stubborn Kudawecha was determined to bring back Aterima's father back to health, and so off they went to the nearest Kibrahacha tree.

thorns, with only a few closed flowers at the very top. Kudawecha, experienced veteran in all things Aruban flora and fauna, told Aretima to start plucking the thorns of the tree to climb to the top where the flowers are. Aretima, just as determined to save her father, didn't hesitate to start.

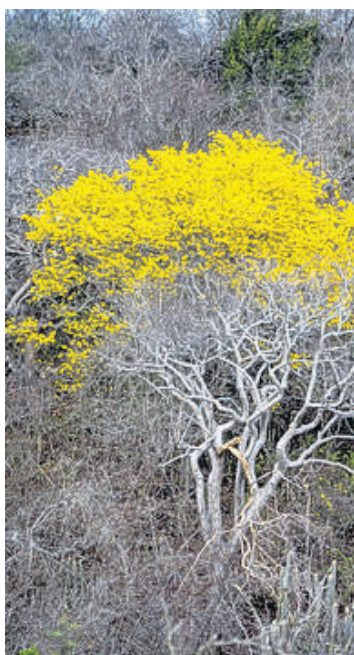
To her surprise, every time she plucked a thorn of the tree, a bright, yellow flower bloomed in its place. The thorns were hard to pluck out, but Aretima continued plucking with enthusiasm and wonder at the unfolding sight before her. Not too long after she was able to fill her entire satchel with the yellow flowers.

Kudawecha, satisfied to see Aretima so happy and

encouraged to help her father, took her back to her hut.

Upon arriving back at the hut, Aretima's mother quickly made a tea out of the flowers and gave it to her sick husband. Miraculously, after just one sip of the tea, the father's fever left his body immediately, and he opened eyes and sprung up feeling new.

The next morning, they all visited the same Kibrahacha tree that saved the life of Aretima's father and they saw another miracle. The tree was covered again in the same bright, yellow flowers, with not a thorn in sight. And as the legend goes, from that day on, the Kibrahacha tree no longer produced any more thorns. □



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Dining in? Try making some local favorites! How to make “funchi”

(Oranjestad)—One of the most famous Aruban snacks or appetizers is “funchi hasa” (fried polenta sticks), a super easy meal that adults and children will both enjoy. Here’s how to make it!

Before we start, get to know the basics

What is funchi hasa? Funchi, or Aruban polenta, is a popular side dish for local dishes, like soups, stews and fried fish. Made from a corn flour, water and butter mixture, this appetizer is traditionally eaten alongside a warm meal. However, locals also like to fry sticks of funchi for a quick and filling snack.



Ingredients (measured by heart)

1. Polenta flour/Funchi flour
2. Water
3. Butter
4. Salt to taste

Directions

Bring water to a boil in a medium-sized sauce pan. Add in some salt and butter to taste in the boiling water and let this dissolve and melt. Then, gradually add the flour while stirring with a wooden spoon. The mixture will start to begin to harden pretty fast, so be careful not to add too much. At this phase of cooking, you want a goopy thick mixture, but thin enough so you can continue to stir to get all the lumps out.

After reaching a semi-firm, yet flexible texture, grab a baking pan or any large, deep plate, and pour the mixture in. Be sure that this plate is wet or greased so that the mixture does not stick to the bottom. Let this cool completely while it firms up for the last time. Once it's cooled you can enjoy it as is, topped with some butter or shredded cheese. Or, you can take it to another level of deliciousness.

When your funchi is firm enough, cut it into strips (size is up to you). Heat up some oil in a pan and fry those babies up! After frying, you can top it with some cheese or enjoy it with your favorite dipping sauce. □



Photo credit of fried funchi sticks: Jacqueline Felida on Pinterest.

Adriaan Laclé: One of Aruba’s richest men in the twentieth century



(Oranjestad)—The name Adriaan Laclé may ring a bell to locals as one of the main roads on the island, but about a century ago, Adriaan Laclé was a rich businessman, well-known for his generosity, wealth, and taste.

Adriaan was born in 1866 and was the eldest of six children. Not much is known about his childhood upbringing or any of his earlier business ordeals, but during his hay day he often helped people get loans, was a well-established trader, and owned several plots of land. In fact, he commissioned the construction of the famous La Quinta Carmen manor—now a restaurant. Though he himself never lived in the beautiful manor, his own house also reflected his success and good taste. Today his house still stands in good condition and can be found in the back streets of main street Oranjestad.

Regarding his personal life, it has been said that he was married twice during his lifetime. He had his first daughter during his first marriage but lost his wife soon after her birth. During his second marriage, he fathered 16 children. However, it has been said that only 11 of those 17 made it past 18 years of age. Perhaps two of his most well-known daughters are Maria Monica Laclé and Maria Veneranda Laclé, who went on to marry successful brothers Eloy Arends and Maximilian Arends, respectively. Their houses are still standing; Eloy and Maria Monica’s mansion functions as the townhall, used to host civil marriages, while Maximilian and Maria Veneranda’s house stands on the opposite side of the road to them—though currently under renovation after years left in ruin.

Source: De Kolibrie op de Rots (en meer over de geschiedenis van Aruba) by Evert Bongers.

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Cas Floria: The Decorated Houses of Aruba

(Oranjestad)—There may be as many as 200 to 300 houses in Aruba that have beautiful decorations, including curtains, stars, flowers, half-moons, etc., placed on the corners or the upper parts of the house.

These houses can be found everywhere, in nearly every district of Aruba. People always thought that these designs came from an Indigenous culture; possibly, the star design resembled the way it was shown, similar to the "God Sun" of the Indigenous people. However, the history of this decorative system does not go very far back in time.

In his book *Millefiori di Aruba*, Father Nooyen declares that the first house to receive this type of decoration was the home of Mr. Bernardo Eman Croes in Pos Chikito. Julien (Janchi) Christiaans and Gregorio (Goy) Semeleer built this house in 1920 and created the decorations on the upper corners of the house. Other people in Pos Chikito, who saw this beautiful work, also wanted their houses decorated in the same way.

Leoncio (Joonchi) Henricus of Pos Chikito learned the work from Janchi Christiaans and, together with his son Bonifacio (Bonny) Henricus, continued decorating houses in Pos Chikito and Sabana Basora.

Janchi Christiaans, Goy Semeleer, and others from Noord, such as Hilario Christiaans, Victor Tromp, Gerardo Jacobs, and Cornelis Rosa, brought the same decoration to houses in Noord and Paradera. In 1927, Janchi Christiaans built a house for Julian Tromp in Buguruy.

This was the first house in Noord to receive this type of decoration. Later, those in Paradera, Santa Cruz, and Savaneta copied the house decorations. They practiced

these systems up until 1944.

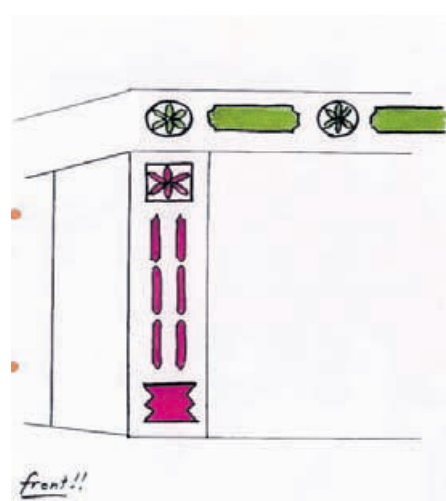
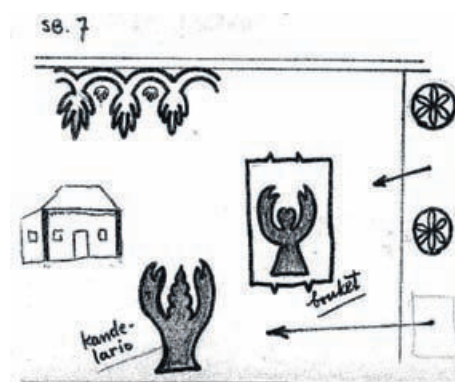
Even today, the patterns are well preserved and protected, but they are no longer used.

Janchi Christiaans began cutting the patterns out of zinc plates and cardboard. He also had his own creations and systems, while Leoncio and Bonifacio Henricus produced their own fantasies. This is what made these decorations popular: many people could turn their imagination into expressive art.

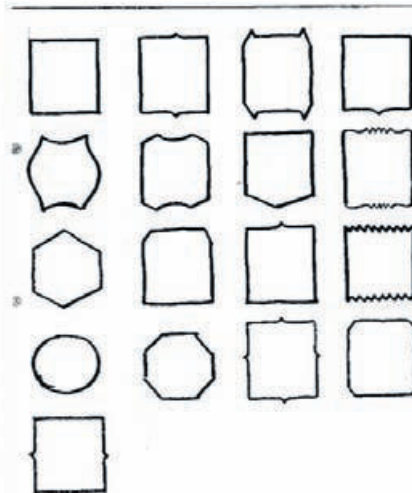
However, the decoration of houses was not originally Janchi Christiaans's idea. Janchi was a disciple of his father, Hose Christiaans, and of the Donati family, from Italian ancestors. They also made these decorations, though without using any patterns, simply designing and applying them with common plaster as the material.

Using Dr. Johan Hartog's *Aruba, Breve Historia* as reference, I noticed that he also writes that these designs are not indigenous symbols, but only decorative fantasies. One point of disagreement is that he wrote that in 1820 someone from Curaçao began this type of decoration in Aruba.

This means that, according to Father Nooyen, who declared that it began in 1920, it would have actually started 100 years earlier. As



Kuadronan (frames)



part of his research, Ito Tromp also interviewed Mr. Julio Maduro of the Department of Labor at that time, who told him that around 1880 Johannes (Janchi) Wolff began with house decorations. And as Janchi himself said, he learned this from his grandfather, who in earlier times had built the first lighthouse at California Point.

After comparing his information, Ito Tromp wrote that Hartog was right concerning the period when decorated houses began in Aruba in 1820. However, it was not people from Curaçao who started it. Victor Tromp, who was 87 years old at the time of writing, was a member of Janchi Wolff's family.

Julio Maduro said that in 1920 they began again with this type of decoration. In general, there is no specific year (up to now) when Arubans first began with this decorative artistic expression. It is interesting to know that these decorations are a kind of symbol for several generations.

For example: Decorations that appear on the house of the Arends family could also be seen on the houses of the Bermudez or Croes families. This was because parents always gave a specific sign to their

sons or daughters when they were getting married.

It was also said that these designs had a certain kind of voodoo purpose, to keep away the spirits of the Indigenous people who were buried in the neighborhoods where the houses now stand. However, this has almost completely disappeared.

As for the continuation of these designs from family to family, this is a cultural heritage that is no longer established. For this reason, in earlier times, every young man who married had to have his own house; otherwise, there would be no marriage.

The designs were created according to the individual's imagination. If he saw, for example, six pairs of birds on a tree, he would then paint six pairs of birds on a tree. If he wanted to express his love for his twin children, then he designed a twin.

Nowadays, if you want to use these designs for your house, don't worry—you can simply copy them and paint them.

Source: *E casnan Decora na Aruba* (1976) by Ito Tromp.

The district of Savaneta: A quick history guide to the island's first capital

(Oranjestad)—Before Oranjestad became the island nation's capital, Aruba's first capital was the district of Savaneta. Here is where the cultural identity of Aruba was born, and from where the rest of the island developed into what it is today.

Savaneta is said to have been the first place where the Caquetio inhabitants first stepped foot on the island. Though there isn't hard evidence to back this up, but considering the legend of the Cacique Arua, it is believed that there were already movements on Aruba—and Savaneta—around 88 AD.

The Caquetios probably made their way to the island either from Venezuela, Colombia or other Caribbean islands in the region, but with good weather it was relatively easy for them to travel back and forth in their canoes. So, since the Caquetios discovered the island, Aruba found her first form of civilization.

It wasn't until 1499 when Aruba met another group of people who set foot on the island: the Spanish explorer Alonso de Ojeda. De Ojeda first took notice of Aruba off the coast of Venezuela, during his exploration of the Latin American country. This was on August 9th, 1499. However, de Ojeda didn't actually sail to the island till 4 days



later, on August 23rd, 1499. This was the beginning of the Spanish era on Aruba (1499-1636).

Alonso usually didn't stop at every island or land he saw, especially not in the Caribbean. He would often take notice of land from afar and continue sailing. However, Aruba was an exception. He had heard that there were "quebracho"(Kibrahacha) trees on the island, which were commonly used to produce dye or paint. But since these trees could not be found in Savaneta, he continued to search in the area of what is now known as Santa Cruz. The best way to transport the tree barks was via a route passing through Savaneta, and so the first road between Savaneta and Santa Cruz was made.

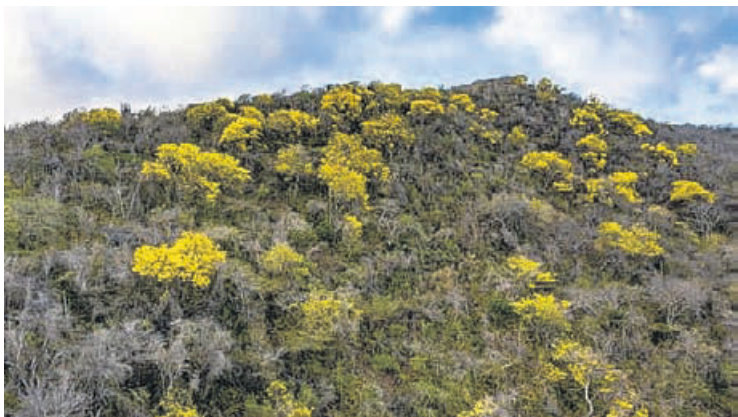
The Dutch colonial era (1636-1805)
During the 80-year war between The Netherlands

and Spain, Dutch explorers and merchants began to travel to the ABC islands. Once they landed in Aruba, they deported the small Arawakan and Spanish community that was living on the island. This was the beginning of colonization of the ABC islands by the Dutch empire. Around the same, the West Indian Company (WIC) was born. Bonaire and Curacao were mostly used for plantations, where the Dutch had transported slaves from Africa. Aruba, on the other hand, was mostly used to raise cattle and to house the haring factory. The Dutch had often forced the indigenous community to work for them.

In 1636, when the Netherlands won the war against Spain, the country surrendered the islands to the Dutch.

The Dutch administration appointed the island's first commander, an Irish man named N. Williams. Because the Dutch were interested in other Caribbean islands and countries in South America, they imported Dutch merchants and business men, all of whom resided in Savaneta. This way, Savaneta officially became the island's first capital.

However, at the end of the 18th century, the commander at the time, J.R. Lauffer, moved his office to



what is now "Horse Bay" in Oranjestad. Because the highest office on the island moved away from Savaneta, the capital lost its title to what was called then Playa.

How Savaneta got its name
The name Savaneta probably has a Spanish origin. It was said that when the Spanish climbed a hill called Yara, they saw that the area was mostly open and had no big trees. In Spanish, such a land area is called a "sabana".

Because of its land surface, Savaneta was a great place to construct cattle farms. From here, the farm-

er culture on Aruba was born. Before the Aruban Gold Rush and the construction of the Refinery in San Nicolas, most residents were farmers, and Savaneta had many inhabitants that farmed fruits and vegetables. They also continued the tradition of raising cattle, like goat, sheep, pigs and horses. Savaneta was one of the first places on the island to have a general farming culture. From this culture, many other traditions were born, like the Dera Gay Holiday that we celebrate every year on June 24th.

Source: Historia di Savaneta (History of Savaneta) by Adolf "Dufi" Kock.



CARNIVAL 72 SCHEDULE

January 16 th :	Tumba Festival (Kids and Teens)	February 6 th :	School Parade (Secondary) San Nicolas
January 17 th :	54th edition of Tumba Festival	February 6 th :	Mask Parade Savaneta
January 18 th :	Fantasy (Children's) Parade	February 7 th :	Jouvert Morning
January 23 rd :	Night of Hit Makers	February 7 th :	Aruba's Grand Lighting Parade Oranjestad
January 30 th :	School Parade (Primary)	February 8 th :	Children's Parade San Nicolas
January 31 st :	Children's Parade Noord	February 8 th :	Burning of King Momito
January 31 st :	Aruba Soca Monarch Finals	February 12 th :	Lighting Parade San Nicolas
February 1 st :	Children's Parade Oranjestad	February 14 th :	Aruba's Grand Carnival Parade 72 San Nicolas
February 4 th :	North International Sunset Parade	February 15 th :	Aruba's Grand Carnival Parade 72 Oranjestad
February 6 th :	School Parade (Secondary) Oranjestad	February 15 th :	Burning of King Momo

Get to know the history of the gold industry on Aruba



(Oranjestad)— We have talked about the Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruin before and its brief history during the gold industry on Aruba, but get to know a little more about the history of the “Aruban Gold Rush.”

The first hint of gold on Aruba actually dates back to 1725, when rumors about gold being found in dug up treasure chests of the Spanish colonial era prompted the first official exploration for gold on the island, commissioned by the Dutch West India Company. Under the leadership of Mr. Paulus Printz, a three-year search was conducted on Aruba, to no avail. Though they found some specks of gold, it was not enough to motivate a further search, and the assignment was discontinued by Printz himself. It wasn't until 100 years later, in 1824, when a young farmer boy named Willem Rasmijn found a lump of gold while out herding his father's sheep in the area of Rooi Fluit on the north coast. His father took it to a local merchant who then sold the lump for \$70. Unbeknownst to the boy and his father, they quite literally struck gold, and as word got out, a gold fever spread among the locals who started searching for more gold.

When the colonial governor in Curacao, Governor Cantz'laar, heard about the news, he sent his adjutant, Capitan van Raders, to start harvesting gold. This was in July 1824. In August of that same year, the governor followed suit to the island, accompanied by high-ranking military officials. When citizens started swarming the area in search for gold, The Netherlands sent more troops to safe guard the gold.

Prominent places where gold was found was in Daimari, Wacobana, Arikok, Rooi Fluit, Hadicouradi and later West punt, where gold ore was found. Because of a lack in advanced technology and materials to harvest the gold, the process took a more primitive approach: Clay rocks containing traces of gold were left to dry in the sun. Then, workers would start chipping the clay away on a large canvas to catch the gold particles that were left behind after the wind blew away the dust from the clay.

In the harvest period of 1824-1825, there was a total of 71,000 kilos collected through commissioned harvesting. Locals themselves reportedly found about 25 pounds worth of gold in the nearby rivers. The following years after that first big harvest, commission work fell off, and in 1828, the director of the goldmines, Johan Gravenhorst, decided to halt harvesting.

Almost 40 years later, the London-based Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd. was granted concession. The firm built their gold mines on Bushiribana, and in the port of Oranjestad a long road that connected the gold mill to the port. The ores themselves came from Sero Plat en Sero Cristal.

By this point, workers were still using primitive methods to harvest the ores. For example, when someone had to go into the mines, there were no stairs or lifts; the person had to be brought down in a big bucket, with two or more workers holding the bucket by a thick rope above ground. Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd. reportedly operated until 1899, and right after the Aruba Gold Concession Ltd. was established, coincidentally also based in London. This time, the gold mill in Balashi was built, and more mines were dug up all around the island. The gold ores that were found were transported via track engine, locally called the “trekinchi”. Despite being more equipped for the job, the Aruba Gold Concession Ltd. could not produce any real profit, and so the concession was terminated just eight years later, in 1908.

A local firm, the “Aruba Goud Maatschappij” (Aruba Gold Company) took over the concession, along with all the materials and equipment. In the beginning, the company saw good profit, and for a while, the island's economy depended primarily on the mining and harvesting of gold. But just like its predecessors, the streak of luck for the Aruba Gold Company came to an end when WWI broke out.

The main reason why production stopped this time was reportedly because of a lack in dynamite for extracting the ores from the mines, as well as a lack in raw materials like German cyanide for the refining process. By the time the war ended, the equipment that was left at Balashi were too old to use again. After the war, gold production on the Aruba was left to a standstill.

According to an issue in Aruba Esso News paper in 1953, Henny Eman wanted to start up digging again, this time using independent miners. He argued that there was proof of more gold to be discovered. Plus, hiring independent miners would boost the island's employment rate.

When it was proven that gold was in fact still present, the executive board on the island promised to fund the project only if the gold dug up proved to be valuable. However, nothing else was reported after this, so it could be concluded that there was no real profitable market on the island anymore.

The ruins of the Bushiribana and Balashi Gold Mills are still standing, and open for the public to visit. These structures offer a glance into the past, to a time where Aruba experienced one of its first wave of industrialization. Today, these structures are persevered as historical monuments. □

Source:

1. “De Kolibrie op de Rots (en meer over the geschiedenis van Aruba)” by Evert Bongers.
2. Aruba Esso News, 1953 issue.

CROSSWORD

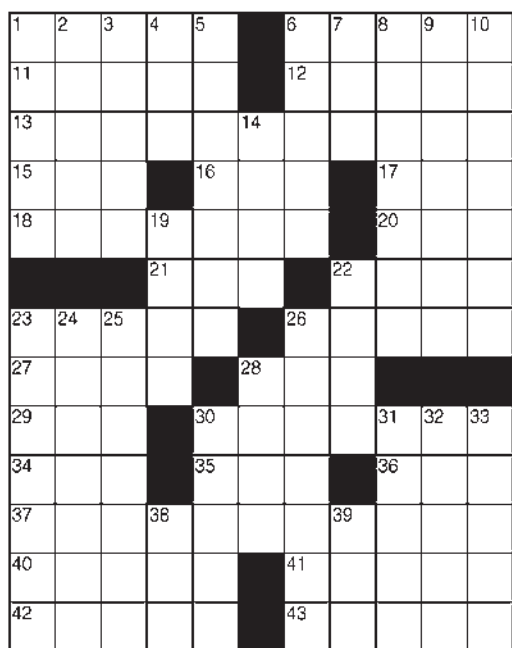
By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 37 False friend
40 Top story
41 Fragment
42 Lab work
43 Civil wrongs

DOWN

- 1 Hungry, probably
2 Like Thor and Odin
3 Pop stars
4 Wallet bill
5 Art lover
6 Jeer at
7 Coffee dispenser
8 Tourists' cars
9 Patella
10 City ways
14 Quite un- common
19 Hangs low
22 Beach cover
23 Circus star
24 Time of delivery, perhaps
25 Facets
26 Adjust to new conditions
28 Crooked
30 Brake shapes
31 Cavalry weapon
32 Put in office
33 Grows weary
38 Young fox
39 Life story, for short



1-24

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

1-24

CRYPTOQUOTE

YDU XYLL VSHDX IMYTV

RTKHN — ZSUD HV SHVK PYT,

PYT EUUW DY JIHD. — MYM

RIQWUP

Cryptoquote: FOR WHATEVER WE LOSE (LIKE A YOU OR A ME), IT'S ALWAYS OUR SELF WE FIND IN THE SEA. — E.E. CUMMINGS

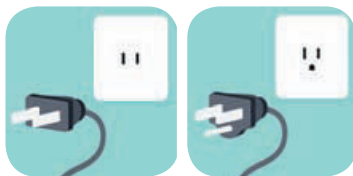


Cruise ship Schedule: Jan. 13 - 18 2026

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
TUE	13	CARNIVAL MAGIC	07.00	16.00	B	1
		CELEBRITY SILHOUETTE	08.00	23.00	C	1
		SERENADE OF THE SEAS	08.00	23.00	I	1
WED	14	ROTTERDAM	08.00	17.00	B	1
		BRITANNIA	07.00	18.00	C	1
		OASIS OF THE SEAS	08.00	23.00	I	1
		FREEWINDS	06.00	****	E	1
THU	15	COSTA PACIFICA	07.00	22.00	B	1
		CARNIVAL VENEZIA	09.00	22.00	C	1
		NORWEGIAN SKY	11.00	20.00	I	1
SAT	17	STAR PRIDE	06.00	16.00	B	1
		ZUIDERDAM	08.00	17.00	C	1
		AIDAPERLA	09.00	22.00	I	1
SUN	18	MARELLA DISCOVERY	08.00	20.00	B	1
		OCEANIA INSIGNIA	11.30	22.00	C	1
		FREEWINDS - Dept.	****	22.30	E	-

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic but important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.



Electrical power

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.



Drinking water

The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.



Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

SUDOKU

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

King Classic Sudoku

9		5			4			
		7	1				5	
1	8					4		
			5	7			1	
		1						
8	9			3				7
4	7	6				9		8
5	2		4	6		1		

Difficulty: ★★★

1/15

Answer to previous puzzle

4	6	3	7	5	1	9	8	2
7	2	1	8	3	9	5	4	6
8	9	5	2	6	4	3	1	7
9	5	6	1	8	2	4	7	3
2	4	7	6	9	3	1	5	8
1	3	8	4	7	5	2	6	9
3	7	9	5	1	6	8	2	4
5	8	4	3	2	7	6	9	1
6	1	2	9	4	8	7	3	5

Difficulty: ★★★

1/14

U.S. overdose deaths fell through most of 2025, federal data reveals

By **MIKE STOBBE**
AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP)—U.S. overdose deaths fell through most of last year, suggesting a lasting improvement in an epidemic that had been worsening for decades.

Federal data released Wednesday showed that overdose deaths have been falling for more than two years the longest drop in decades but also that the decline was slowing.

And the monthly death toll is still not back to what it was before the COVID-19 pandemic, let alone where it was before the current overdose epidemic struck decades ago, said Brandon Marshall, a Brown University researcher who studies overdose trends.

"Overall I think this continues to be encouraging, especially since we're seeing declines almost across the nation," he said.

Overdose deaths fell in 45 states

Overdose deaths began steadily climbing in the 1990s with overdoses involving opioid painkillers, followed by waves of deaths from heroin and more recently illicit fentanyl. Deaths peaked nearly 110,000 in 2022, fell a little in 2023 and then plummeted 27% in 2024, to around 80,000. That was the largest



Jonathan Dumke, a senior forensic chemist with the Drug Enforcement Administration, holds vials of fentanyl pills at a DEA research laboratory on Tuesday, April 29, 2025, in Northern Virginia.
Associated Press

one-year decline ever recorded.

The new Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data runs through August 2025 and represents the first update of monthly provisional drug overdose deaths since the federal government shutdown.

An estimated 73,000 people died from overdoses in the 12-month period that ended August 2025, down about 21% from the 92,000 in the previous 12-month period. □

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CLASSIFIEDS

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With pool
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1 BR week 01 room # 3208
8 weeks remaining \$6000
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johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Divi Phoenix

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Penthouse 2 BR WK # 1 room # 672
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Property land 4433m2
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39 x 88m2 and 3 x 72m2
Price :\$5,357,098,20
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3 BR 3 1/2 bath
5th floor ocean view
Price :\$1,550,000
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220060

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week # 5 Room #3524
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HEALTH

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Oranjestad

Hospital 7:00 pm / 10:00pm
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San Nicolas

Imsan 24 hours
Tel.524 8833

PHARMACY ON DUTY

Oranjestad:

Paradera: Tel.588 6638
San Nicolas:
Centro Medico:Tel.584 5794

OTHER

Dental Clinic 587 9850
Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002
Urgent Care 586 0448
Walk-In Doctor's Clinic
+297 588 0539

EMERGENCY

Police	100
Oranjestad	527 3140
Noord	527 3200
Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
Ambulancia	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

TAXI SERVICES

Taxi Tas	587 5900
Prof. Taxi	588 0035
Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

TRAVEL INFO

Aruba Airport	524 2424
American Airlines	582 2700
Avianca	588 0059
Jet Blue	588 2244
Surinam	582 7896

AID FOUNDATIONS

Aruba Food Bank
Tel. 588 0002
FAVI- Visually Impaired
Tel. 582 5051
Alcoholics Anonymous
Tel. 736 2952
Narcotics Anonymous
Tel. 583 8989
Fundacion Contra Violencia
Relacional Tel. 583 5400
Centre for Diabetes
Tel. 524 8888
Child Abuse Prevention
Tel. 582 4433
Quota Club Tel. 525 2672

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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

ARUBA
TODAY

BONDIA
ARUBA

How to reach us!

Downtown

ST P
Violence Against Women

Luxury retailer Saks seeks bankruptcy protection overwhelmed by debt

By **ANNE D'INNOCENZIO**
and **ELAINE KURTENBACH**
The Associated Press

The owner of Saks Fifth Avenue is seeking bankruptcy protection, buffeted by rising competition and the massive debt it took on to buy its rival in the luxury sector, Neiman Marcus, just over a year ago.

Saks Global, which also operates Bergdorf Goodman, has secured roughly \$1.75 billion in financing, the New York company said as it filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy Wednesday in the Southern District of Texas.

The privately held Saks Global said its stores will remain open as it restructures company debt, meaning that it will honor the programs it has for customers. Suppliers and employees will be paid, Saks said.

There are about 33 Saks stores and 36 Neiman Marcus locations, according to the company, as well as two Bergdorf Goodman stores and roughly 70 Saks



Associated Press

Off 5th discount stores.

"This is a defining moment for Saks Global, and the path ahead presents a meaningful opportunity to strengthen the foundation of our business and position it for the future," said Geoffrey van Raemdonck, who took over for CEO and Executive Chairman Richard Baker this week. Baker had assumed control after the

company's CEO Marc Metrick, who stepped down earlier this month.

When Saks said that it would buy Neiman Marcus for \$2.65 billion in the summer of 2024, the goal was to create a powerhouse in a luxury sector that had grown more fragmented. Online sellers have been siphoning customers, and big name brands had ex-

panded the number of its own stores to sell its goods. But the acquisition only added to an already onerous debt at Saks as luxury sales weakened. Saks was having trouble paying suppliers before and by last year it began to stretch out payment periods, angering brands and fraying relationships.

The debt-fueled acquisition

of Neiman Marcus made bankruptcy a more likely possibility, said Neil Saunders, managing director of GlobalData Retail. But he was surprised by the speed at which it took place.

"Behind the glossy facade the deal was an entanglement of complex financial engineering that made it impossible for the group to execute their stated vision," Saunders wrote Wednesday.

And it is a difficult environment for retailers like Saks even if it were on firmer financial footing.

Global sales of luxury goods are expected to contract for the second straight year as consumers, anxious about the economy, pare back spending, according to a study by Bain & Co. consultancy released in November.

Hudson's Bay, Canada's oldest company, began liquidating all but six of its stores in March 2025. Neiman Marcus entered bankruptcy protection for about four months in 2020 as the coronavirus pandemic spread. □



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Sales of a powerful Nvidia AI chip to China gets the greenlight, with conditions

By **MICHELLE CHAPMAN**
AP Business Writer

The Trump administration placed new security requirements on Nvidia's semiconductor sales to China, but essentially greenlighted the export of

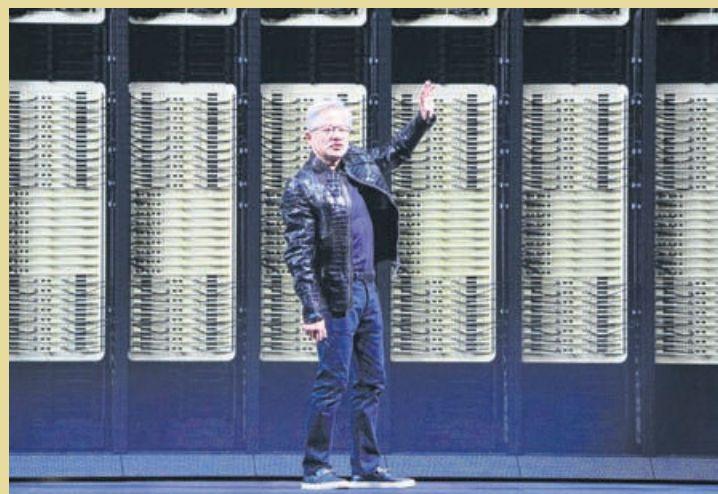
its powerful H200 artificial intelligence chips to Chinese buyers. Nvidia must ensure that there is an adequate supply in the U.S., and the H200 chips must undergo a third-party review before being export-

ed to China, according to new rules set by the Commerce Department's Bureau of Industry and Security. But the new rules lower the bar for exports. China won't be allowed to use the chips for military purposes and is not allowed to import more than 50% of the chips sold to U.S. customers. "We applaud President Trump's decision to allow America's chip industry to compete to support high paying jobs and manufacturing in America," Nvidia told The Associated Press in a prepared statement Wednesday.

"Offering H200 to approved commercial customers, vetted by the Department of Commerce, strikes a thoughtful balance that is great for America." The new Commerce rules ar-

rive just over a month after President Donald Trump said he'd allow Nvidia to sell the H200 to "approved customers" in China. The H200 is not Nvidia's most advanced product. Those chips, called Blackwell and the upcoming Rubin, were not part of the approved chips for export.

A group of Democratic senators has objected to sales in China, saying that the chips could aid China's military, help China carry out more effective cyberattacks against the U.S. and strengthen China's economic and manufacturing sector. The approval of the licenses to sell Nvidia H200 chips reflects the increasing power and close relationship that the company's founder and CEO, Jensen Huang, enjoys with the president. □



Nvidia founder and CEO Jensen Huang speaks about the NVIDIA Rubin AI super computing platform during a Nvidia news conference ahead of the CES tech show Monday, Jan. 5, 2026, in Las Vegas.

Associated Press

Diversity still a major issue at the Winter Olympics. The US is making some strides

By **TIM REYNOLDS**

AP Sports Writer

LAKE PLACID, N.Y. (AP) —

When USA Bobsled and Skeleton unveils its Olympic rosters, the most likely scenario is that either eight or nine women will wind up competing for that federation on the ice at the Milan Cortina Winter Games.

Most of those sliders will almost certainly be women of color.

By the time the Games open, this could be the most diverse U.S. Olympic winter roster ever assembled. The 2018 U.S. roster for the 2018 Games included 21 athletes of either Black or Asian descent, about 8% of the total; the 2026 team could top that number. There is still obvious potential for far more growth on the diversity front, but some athletes feel that steps are being taken in the right direction.

"We're really doing this," said U.S. skeleton athlete Mystique Ro, a woman of Black and Korean descent and someone who teamed with Austin Florian to win last year's world championship in the sport's mixed event. "The train has left the station. We're going.



Erin Jackson competes in the women's 500 meters at the U.S. Olympic trials for long track speed skating at the Pettit National Ice Center Sunday, Jan. 4, 2026 in Milwaukee.

Associated Press

And it's such a surreal feeling. ... We're really making history out here and it's not slowing down at all."

People of color fill the rosters for non-traditional winter sports nations like Jamaica but most of the dominant teams from European powers and, to be fair, the U.S. as well are almost entirely white. Still, some of the top American medal hopefuls at these Olympics will be Black women, and that's

not exactly a new phenomenon especially in bobsled.

Bobsledder Elana Meyers Taylor is a five-time Olympic medalist and is the most decorated Black athlete in Winter Games history. Kaysha Love is the reigning world champion in monobob, making her the first Black woman to hold that title. Speedskater Erin Jackson, who in 2022 became the first Black woman to win

Olympic winter gold in an individual sport, is back for more in 2026. Laila Edwards is a rising star of the powerhouse U.S. women's hockey team and will be the first Black woman to wear the American sweater on the Olympic stage.

"It's a really big deal," Edwards said when the roster was unveiled. "Representation matters. In terms of processing it, I think I'm just trying to use it as something

that motivates me to be the best role model and person I can be."

It also remains clear that the sports offered as part of the Winter Olympic program seem to come with fewer opportunities for athletes of color. The National Ski Areas Association said in 2024 that, of all guests who visit U.S. ski resorts, about 1% identify as Black. The reasons most commonly cited are cost and accessibility: many winter sports are expensive and ski areas are generally remote.

Of the 2,900 or so athletes who competed at the most recent Winter Games in Beijing, the overwhelming majority of them identified white. There was a smattering of non-traditional winter sports nations to see athletes qualify Ghana, Nigeria and Haiti among them and the impact that Jamaica's famed "Cool Runnings" bobsled team had when it debuted at the Olympics a generation ago is still felt today.

"I never thought I would be doing this," said bobsledder Adanna Johnson, who was 17 when she competed for Jamaica at last year's world championships. □

FTC seeks info from 20 universities with Division I sports into whether agents are following law

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Federal Trade Commission is asking 20 universities with Division I sports programs whether agents working with their athletes are following a federal law tied to sports-agent conduct. The FTC's inquiry, announced Monday, began with sending letters to schools seeking responses by March 23 tied to compliance with the Sports Agent Responsibility and Trust Act that was enacted in 2004. The FTC didn't reveal specifically which schools had been contacted.

Christopher Mufarrige, the director of the FTC's Bureau of Consumer Protection, said in a state-

ment the inquiry "is aimed at better understanding whether sports agents are complying with the law and the degree to which student athletes are being protected."

The letters seek information dating to July 1, 2021, coinciding with athletes being allowed to profit from their fame through name, image and likeness rules.

Requested information includes when athletes entered into a contract, when the school was notified by the agent of that deal, whether there had been any complaints about an agent and copies of agency contracts with athletes' personal in-

formation redacted.

The sports agent act is a federal law that prohibits agents from recruiting an athlete by providing false or misleading information or providing anything of value to the athlete before entering a contract. There's also the state-level Uniform Athlete Agent Act, offering similar requirements in at least 40 states and other jurisdictions.

The structure and penalties can vary by state. Cases are difficult to prosecute and aren't frequently pursued. Notably, officials in North Carolina spent years pursuing cases under the state-level act against a former NFL agent and five others tied to providing

improper benefits to Tar Heels football players dating to 2010.

Charges were first filed in 2013. Most cases were

resolved either through dismissals or deals with prosecutors. One reached trial in 2020, ending in a mistrial. □



The Federal Trade Commission building is seen in Washington, Saturday, Dec. 8, 2024.

Associated Press

NFL playoff weekend sets a record with 12 fourth-quarter lead changes

By **JOSH DUBOW**
AP Pro Football Writer

The NFL has never experienced a playoff weekend quite like this.

The first four games of the 2025 postseason featured a combined 12 lead changes in the fourth quarter, topping the record for the most in an entire playoffs.

The previous high for an entire postseason, according to the Elias Sports Bureau, was 10 in the 2007 playoffs, including three in the Super Bowl when the New York Giants ended New England's bid for a perfect season.

The four winning touchdowns scored in the final three minutes of regulation also set a record for an entire postseason.

The weekend started with a back-and-forth game between Carolina and the Los Angeles Rams that wasn't decided until Matthew Stafford's 19-yard TD pass to Colby Parkinson provided the record-tying fourth lead change of the fourth quarter.

Before this season, there had been only four playoff games featuring four fourth-quarter lead changes, with the most recent coming in New England's overtime win over Kansas City in the 2018 AFC title game.

The wait for another lasted just one day as Buffalo and Jacksonville traded leads in their game before the Bills prevailed 27-24 on Josh Allen's 1-yard run with 1:04 left for the fourth lead change in the final quarter.

The next game that day featured three more, with San Francisco topping Philadelphia 23-19 in a win capped by Brock Purdy's 4-yard TD pass to Christian McCaffrey with 2:54 left.

The other fourth-quarter lead change came Saturday night when Chicago became the fourth team in NFL history to win a playoff game after trailing by at least 15 points at the start of the fourth quarter.

The last time that happened came in Super Bowl 52 when New England rallied

from 28-9 down at the end of the third quarter the game had been 28-3 to beat Atlanta 34-28 in over-

an offensive play with the lead, with it last happening in Kansas City's 25-22 overtime win over San Francisco.

quarter.

Points for the defense

The weekend ended with

Tampa Bay beat San Francisco 31-6 in the divisional round that season and Philadelphia knocked off Atlanta 20-6.

NFC West teams fill up division round

The wins by the Rams and 49ers give the NFC West three of the four teams in the NFC divisional round along with No. 1 seed Seattle and a chance at having both conference finalists.

This marked just the fourth time in NFL history that three teams from the same division made it to the divisional round in the same season, with it last happening in 2022 when Philadelphia beat the New York Giants in one game and Dallas lost to San Francisco in the other.

It also happened in the NFC Central in 1997 with Green Bay, Minnesota and Tampa making it and in the 1992 NFC East when Dallas, Philadelphia and Washington did it.

If Los Angeles wins at Chicago to advance to the NFC championship game against the Seattle-San Francisco winner, it would be the 21st time that one division had both title game participants and the fourth for the NFC West.

The Rams and 49ers split title games with Los Angeles, winning in the 2021 season and San Francisco in 1989. Seattle beat the 49ers at home in the 2013 season.

Seventh seed struggles

This marked the sixth season since the NFL added a seventh playoff team in each conference, and the results haven't been good so far.

With the losses by Green Bay and the Chargers, those seventh seeds are now 1-11 in the wild-card round, with the only win coming in the 2023 season when the Packers beat the Cowboys 48-32.

Eight of the other 11 games were won by double-digits by the No. 2 seed, with the average margin of victory in those 11 wins being 12.4 points per game. □



Los Angeles Rams tight end Colby Parkinson (84) dives into the end zone for a touchdown during the second half of an NFL football game against the Arizona Cardinals, Sunday, Jan. 4, 2026, in Inglewood, Calif.

Associated Press

time.

The win was the record seventh this season for the Bears when they trailed in the final two minutes and the third this season in six games that they trailed by double digits in the final five minutes.

That matches the total of the other 31 teams combined. The rest of the league was 3-158 in that scenario.

What made the game even more odd was the fact that the Bears never ran a play on offense while leading the game. Chicago scored a field goal on the opening drive but allowed a touchdown by Green Bay.

The Bears didn't go ahead again until Caleb Williams' 25-yard pass to D.J. Moore with 1:43 to play. Green Bay then held the ball for the rest of the game, falling short on an incomplete pass on the final play.

This marked just the fifth time in the last 20 seasons that a team won a playoff game without running

co in Super Bowl 58.

Even stranger, the Bears and Packers played three times this season and Chicago ran no plays on offense when leading, compared to 106 for Green Bay. But the Bears won two of those contests, with their only lead in a Week 16 win coming on a game-ending TD pass in overtime from Williams to Moore.

The two late game-winning TD passes from Stafford and Williams on Saturday marked the first time since Dec. 23, 1972, that two playoff games on the same day featured a winning touchdown pass in the final two minutes, according to Sportradar.

The games that day included Terry Bradshaw's 60-yard pass to Franco Harris known as the "Immaculate Reception" in Pittsburgh's win over the Raiders and Roger Staubach's 10-yarder to Ron Sellers for Dallas against San Francisco to cap the first playoff comeback from at least 15 points down to start the fourth

two stellar defensive efforts, with New England beating the Los Angeles Chargers 16-3 and Houston getting two defensive touchdowns in a 30-6 win over Pittsburgh.

The Texans became the eighth team in the Super Bowl era to score two defensive TDs in a playoff game and the second to do it in the last 18 seasons. The other time it happened came in the wild-card round two years ago when Houston did it against Cleveland.

According to the NFL research department, the Texans became the second team to get multiple defensive touchdowns and allow no touchdowns in a playoff game. Chicago did it in a 73-0 win over Washington in the 1940 NFL championship game.

The Patriots will next host the Texans in the first playoff game featuring two teams that didn't allow a touchdown in the previous round of the playoffs since the 2002 NFC title game.